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STAT

Church refuses Ford request

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Washington—Senator Frank

Church (D., Idaho), the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, rejected yesterday a direct appeal from President Ford to suppress a political assassination report and accused the White House of trying to "disrupt" the congressional inquiry into espionage operations.

At a news conference, Mr. Church asserted Mr. Ford's announcement of a Central Intelligence Agency leadership change amid the investigation was part of an administration effort to hamper the committee's work.

The chairman said he will vote against the nomination of George Bush, the ambassador to China, to replace William E. Colby as CIA director.

Despite White House and intelligence community objections, the committee indicated its determination to make public by Thanksgiving a report on CIA involvement in political as-

sassination plots that first will be submitted to a secret Senate session.

In a letter to Mr. Ford, Mr. Church took issue yesterday with a presidential warning delivered last week that public disclosure of assassination details provided the committee by the White House would result in "serious harm to the national interest and may endanger individuals."

According to Mr. Church, the report's revelations would create a basis for "an informed public debate on whether there has been an unsound system of secret government."

Such a debate, the chairman added, is "essential" to prevent any repetition of activities attributed to the CIA.

The committee has been probing for months charges of misconduct made against the intelligence community and ex-

pects to wind up its inquiry by Christmas.

Mr. Church increasingly has been critical of what he termed a growing "pattern" of impediments by the White House of the congressional probe into alleged political assassination plots and into supersecret operations of the National Security Agency that monitors communications.

Mr. Church took the position Mr. Colby's dismissal represented further evidence of the disruptive pattern and said the former director—who will continue to run the CIA until Mr. Bush is confirmed—will be called on for any further information required by the committee.

"The new director knows nothing about the CIA," Mr. Church observed tartly of Mr. Bush, whose reputation is that of a political troubleshooter.